Evidence-Based Forensic Nursing Practice

Description: Evidence-based practice is defined as a life-long problem solving approach to the delivery of health care that integrates the best evidence from well-designed studies and integrates that external evidence with a patient's preferences and values and a clinican's expertise which includes internal evidence that is a reflection of patient data (Mazurek-Melnyk, & Fineout-Overholt, 2019).

The purpose of this position statement is to support and describe the significance of evidence-based nursing as the foundation for contemporary Forensic Nursing practice. The AFN Evidence-Based Forensic Nursing Practice Position Statement is congruent with the mission of the Academy of Forensic Nursing and links translation of evidence-based research toward safe and effective clinical practice through the dissemination of scholarship, education and service (AFN, 2019; Curtis, Fry, Shaban, & Considine, 2017).
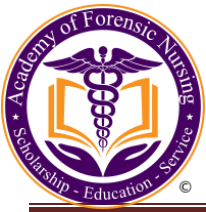
Background:

Forensic nurses make critical decisions in the application of forensic healthcare by relying on knowledge from biological, physical, and psychosocial sciences. Forensic nursing knowledge may be obtained in several ways including formal academic and continuing education, simulation experiences, clinical practice, research, and mentorship. Evidence-based practice has become a significant issue in specialty areas of nursing practice and the delivery of evidence-based care has repeatedly been shown to improve patient outcomes, quality and safety in practice (Sackett, Straus, Richardson, Rosenberg, & Haynes, 2000). It is the responsibility of the forensic nurse to deliver care based on evidence and to be able to access, evaluate, and integrate the best available evidence to improve the delivery of forensic health care in all patient populations affected by crime and interpersonal violence. While interprofessional collaboration with partners in law enforcement, criminal justice, and victim advocacy have the potential to create an all encompassing response to victims of violence, nursing is responsible for forensic nursing practice and patient advocacy utilizing the strength of professional licensure, clinical expertise and evidence-based practice to improve health and patient outcomes.

AFN Position*:* It is the position of the Academy of Forensic Nursing that forensic nurses adequately translate the most current available evidence to ensure safe and effective clinical practice and guide patient care. As a leader in the development and dissemination of contemporary forensic nursing education while supporting the full scope of practice for the forensic nurse, AFN recognizes that the evidence base grows as current understanding of forensic nursing practice expands over time (AFN, 2020). Forensic nursing professionals are uniquely qualified to identify and develop the evidence based principles and practices that support forensic nursing. It is through a commitment to lifelong learning and dedication to ongoing development of the evidence base that forensic nurses will propel the science and practice of forensic nursing to provide high quality, trauma-informed, evidence-based care to patients affected by violence and crime.

References:

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